

Chancellor's Community Forum
School Scorecard

April 29, 2009

Kelly Miller Middle School – 301 49th St NE

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Discussion Leader: Liz Cohen & Dr. Ronald Taylor

The notes below reflect our effort to summarize the comments, questions and concerns expressed at each meeting. They are not recorded verbatim and should not be considered direct quotations.

Overview: At the beginning of the group session the question “What do you think of when you hear the words *school scorecard*?” was proposed to teachers, parents, students, and community members. Answers included test scores, AYP, tax dollars, and quality and direction of schools.

Participants were then given two example scorecards to study, one from New York Public Schools, and one from Chicago Public Schools. After taking time to individually identify what they liked and disliked about these scorecards, the topic was opened up for group discussion. There were several concerns that these scorecards had too much data and were difficult to interpret. One parent said it would be helpful to have a key showing what is a good or bad score so it's easier to tell if your school has a good or bad score. The way the Chicago scorecard was broken down was favored to New York's, but it was observed that the data was still difficult to interpret. A parent said she was able to understand the information, but most parents can't take the time to sit and fully study all the information provided.

The discussion then moved into the concern of people interpreting the data wrong, and that this data could cause negative effects. For example, a school staff member said that their school is growing, but would probably still receive a bad score. Chancellor Rhee was present and noted that one of the benefits with score cards is that they can more easily measure progress, where as Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) is a flat line that you either fall above or below. The chancellor also informed the group that the score cards could provide rankings among other schools that serve students/families with similar demographics. This would provide an opportunity to see the schools that stand out among schools facing similar challenges.

Attendance:

2 Teachers

3 Parents

4 Community Advocates

1 Other School Staff

3 Students

5 Other (DCPS)

Notes:

Issue	Comments
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chicago Scorecard shows that parent participation is 66%. Why didn't 34% participate? Are there more important issues preventing parents from getting involved?
Clarity of Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chicago scorecard is more clear than in the NY scorecard.• Chicago's scorecard has information broken down into categories, which is good.• The New York City scorecard assumes that the audience has a high literacy rate. It should be more parent-friendly. Or, we should offer scorecard orientation for parents so that they can digest the information at hand.
Interpretation of scorecard data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we construct the data that is published in a positive way?• For instance, at Kelly Miller, how do you show progress that is being made while acknowledging that a large percentage of students are on Free & Reduced lunch?• Giving schools grades is good, but what if your school receives an F? If I were a principal, I would be nervous about that.• Chicago's categories and colors are great. We need to keep the integrity of the data and make the language as simple as possible for parents to easily understand the information.• What are the unintended consequences of highlighting all of this data? Not all parents can send their children to different schools depending on the data given on the scorecard. For instance, a parent can say, "I cannot wait for Kelly Miller to move from a C school to an A school," and then opt for another school. The scorecard and the grading system may have the opposite effect of what it is intended to do.
Presentation of Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The data needs to be presented in a positive way – especially in reference to demographics like literacy and poverty rate.• Neither the Chicago scorecard nor the New York City scorecard are that reader friendly.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scorecards can be used to see where schools rank among similar schools as well as the overall district. • The scorecards can show examples of schools that face similar changes but stand out among similar schools. • The data on the Chicago and New York City scorecards is not very clear in distinguishing school and district averages. The scorecard can show the percentage, but a parent might not know if that is good or bad.
Tracking growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming from New York City, I think one of the great opportunities of the scorecard is that you can measure progress of the school. However, when you use Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), it only tracks students who are above proficient, but it does not show the progress of students who are below proficiency. • AYP does not necessarily show growth. The scorecard shows where DCPS needs to put more resources and support. It does not matter if ten of our schools have a score of F if we aren't doing anything centrally to change it.
School funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do some schools receive more funding than others? It seems motives are political and this angers people and makes them distrustful of DCPS as a whole.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens when schools don't make good grades? • We want a tool that will give us a more granular view of schools beyond NCLB and AYP. There are a number of schools in restructuring now that only have some target areas that are preventing them from making AYP. • The data will give us information on which intervention is needed at which school.
Creation of scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there collaboration in making the scorecards? • DCPS is collaborating with the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE). We want our scorecards to be aligned. We don't need different scorecards with different data that may confuse our parents.